



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY - 4 2011

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Vern Buchanan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Buchanan:

Thank you for your letter of February 16, 2011, to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson regarding former phosphate mines in Florida. I appreciate your interest in this matter.

Since 2001, state and federal agencies, including EPA, the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) have been working to understand the potential for exposure to radiation associated with phosphate mining. As you note in your letter, EPA conducted an aerial survey, in coordination with the various state agencies, in January 2011. This survey was conducted for a portion of a Superfund site in Plant City, Florida to determine the correlation between aerial and ground-based measurements at this site.

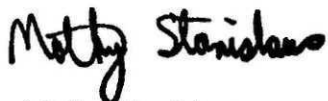
Although the survey results are specific to this one site, the process for conducting the survey contributed valuable information to the agencies as plans for a larger-scale survey were considered. As a result of this information, the agencies learned that there is an excellent correlation between aerial and ground-based measurements. Additionally, using aerial measurements instead of ground measurements for a larger-scale survey could cost about one-tenth of the cost of ground measurements. It is important to note that conducting an aerial survey is not necessarily an indicator of a concern or a need for remedial action. Surveys are also useful tools for confirming areas that are not considered to pose potential health or ecological risks.

Based on this information, EPA is considering a larger-scale aerial survey to collect data related to phosphate mining sites and background areas. We will continue to work closely with state agencies on this effort and will coordinate closely with local communities.

EPA would be pleased to meet with you or your staff to provide an overall summary of the survey data, as well as EPA's strategy to assess potential risks to human health and the environment. EPA remains committed to a collaborative process with state and local governments and other stakeholders prior to conducting a large-scale survey.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may call Carolyn Levine, in EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, at (202) 564-1859.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mathy Stanislaus". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font. The first name "Mathy" is written with a large, looping 'M' and a trailing 'y'. The last name "Stanislaus" is written in a more straightforward cursive style.

Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator